



Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 11 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

Boardrooms 4/5/6 - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley, HA9 0FJ

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Kelcher (Chair)

Davidson (Vice-Chair)

Aden

Colacicco

Crane

Ezeajughi

Mashari

Stopp

Substitute Members

Councillors:

S Choudhary, Daly, Harrison, Hylton, Kabir, Long and
Naheerathan

Councillors:

Colwill and Kansagra

For further information contact: Bryony Gibbs, Governance Officer
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The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

*Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

**Personal Interests:

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party of trade union).

(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above.

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members.

Item	Page
1 Declarations of interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant disclosable pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interests in the items on this agenda.	
2 Deputations (if any)	
To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 69.	
3 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 6
The minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2017 are attached for the committee's consideration.	
4 Matters arising (if any)	
To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.	
5 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 2017-18 Work Programme	7 - 16
This report sets out the scope of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's draft work programme for the next municipal year 2017-18. The work programme covers a broad range of items and policy areas across corporate resources, regeneration and environment, transport and community safety and was selected by members of the committee based on criteria for effective scrutiny. It also sets out the remit for the committee and its responsibilities for scrutiny.	
6 2016-17 Annual Scrutiny Report	17 - 40
The Annual Scrutiny report is a summary of the work conducted by the Scrutiny function throughout the year. This includes task group work, questions and decisions made by both the Community and Wellbeing and Resources and Public Realm committees.	

7 Strategic Overview of the Council's Funding

41 - 58

The committee will receive a presentation providing a strategic overview of the council's funding. A copy of this presentation is attached for members' consideration.

8 Proposed Scope for Scrutiny Task Group on the use of Food Banks in Brent

59 - 74

This report sets out the proposed scope for the Scrutiny task group on the use of food banks in Brent. This task group has been requested by the Scrutiny members as there has been a noticeable increase in the usage of food banks, both in Brent and nationally. The task group will look at Brent, London and the national picture, with a focus on understanding the issue and the current position of central government, local authorities and other public sector partners.

9 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.

10 Date of next meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the committee is scheduled for 5 September 2017.

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 5 September 2017



- Please remember to **SWITCH OFF** your mobile phone during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.



Brent

MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Wednesday 3 May 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Kelcher (Chair) and Councillors Choudhary, Ezeajughi, Maurice (Substitute for Councillor Davidson) and McLeish (Substitute for Councillor Aden).

Also Present: Councillors Miller and Tatler

Apologies were received from: Councillors Aden, Davidson, Mashari and Stopp

1. **Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Deputations (if any)**

There were no deputations.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 March 2017 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Matters arising (if any)**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report and Update on Community Safety**

The committee had before them the Annual Report for 2016-2017 of the Safer Brent Partnership, a statutory community safety partnership established in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The report detailed the activities of the Partnership undertaken in support of the jointly created Safer Brent Partnership Strategy aimed at reducing crime, disorder, substance misuse and reoffending in Brent. The Partnership comprised the London Borough of Brent, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company and NHS Brent Clinical Commission Group. The committee also received an update report on community safety from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment which provided details of Hate Crime, Domestic Abuse and Crime and the Fear of Crime in Brent.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Michael Gallagher (Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police), Councillor Miller (Lead Member for Stronger Communities), Karina Wane (Head of Community Protection) and Amar Dave (Strategic Director of

Regeneration and Environment). Members were informed that Karina Wane was attending in place of Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive of Brent Council) who due to an error had not been invited to attend the meeting.

In the ensuing discussion the committee questioned the work being undertaken to combat anti-Semitism and raised concerns regarding incidents of intimidating behaviour associated with religious sectarianism in Brent's Islamic communities. Referring to the statistics provided regarding hate crime in Brent, members sought further detail regarding the groups affected and questioned why there had been an increase in hate crime related to religion. Members queried the procedure for information sharing with local councillors following the occurrence of a major crime in their wards. In view of the rising figures associated with anti-social behaviour and gang activity in Brent, the committee requested an overview of the work being undertaken to tackle such issues, including drug dealing and prostitution, and highlighted a number of hotspots of illegal activity in the borough. Members questioned what initiatives were pursued with the borough's schools, particularly around issues of domestic violence and violence against women and girls.

In response, Councillor Miller explained that hate crime statistics were closely monitored, emphasised the importance of education in tackling this type of crime and outlined the Council's work with the Brent Interfaith Forum. The Borough Commander also praised the work of the Brent Interfaith Forum and highlighted the importance of monitoring data regarding the fear of crime, as it was recognised that this too had a significant impact on quality of life. The local police response to anti-Semitism included increased patrols on High Holy Days. A strong working relationship was also maintained with the Community Safety Trust, a charity which aimed to protect the Jewish Community from anti-Semitism and other threats. Different communities had different needs and the Borough Commander had visited and addressed worshippers at each of the mosques in Brent around a variety of issues, including concerns relating to the public mood around Britain's exit from the European Union. Whilst it was acknowledged that tensions could exist between different Islamic groups, broadly, community cohesion in Brent was considered to be very good. Karina Wane informed members of a community multi agency forum which had been established to help support victims of hate crime in the community.

The Borough Commander outlined the partnership mechanism for sharing information following a serious crime and explained that the Chief Executive and Lead Member for Stronger Communities would always be notified. Wider information sharing was subject to the need to protect on-going investigations and would be at the discretion of the senior investigating officer. Councillor Miller added that as much information as possible would be shared with ward councillors.

The Borough Commander advised that research had been commissioned with the University College London to explore the reasons for the level of knife crime in London. The early results of this indicated that increasing urbanisation was a key factor. London was a growing city and was experiencing an upsurge in its young population; a trend reflected in Brent's population. As the perpetrators and victims of knife crime were largely under the age of twenty-five, a correlation could be drawn between a larger young population and a higher level of knife crime. The Borough Commander commended the good working relationship that had been developed with Brent's communities most affected by knife crime, such as Harlesden and praised the input of the MP for the area and schools, particularly

Newman Catholic College. Karina Wane espoused the value of information sharing with partner agencies and advised that suspects of knife crime would be offered the same interventions as victims as there was often cross over between the two. Brent was currently developing a predictive modelling matrix to support preventative work with those most at risk of being exploited or engaging in crime and was the first authority in the country to do so. A Stronger Communities Strategy was being developed in collaboration with Brent's communities, with community activity at its centre.

Councillor Miller acknowledged that there had been a slight increase in the level of violent crime but explained that this was not necessarily gang related and included traffic and alcohol related incidents. There was therefore many different aspects to addressing this trend including place-based licensing and police controls to tackle hotspots of criminal activity and close collaborative working across the Safer Brent Partnership. The Borough Commander emphasised the importance of working with a community to support intelligence led enforcement of issues such as drug dealing. Members heard that officers were working closely with women working as prostitutes to assist them out of the work. Whilst prostitution did pose a public nuisance and public health issue, the real challenges related to human trafficking, welfare and safeguarding issues. Karina Wane added that the council had a service to help people exit sex working which had been in operation for the last four years and had been commissioned for a further two years. In the last twelve months it had supported thirty-nine people, leading to approximately twenty-six people ceasing the work.

Councillor Miller outlined work relating to violence against women and girls, including such issues as domestic violence, sexual violence, stalking, female genital mutilation and honour based violence. This work focused on prevention, protection and prosecution and key aspects of this included raising public awareness and seeking to change behaviour. Councillor Miller detailed a project working with perpetrators of domestic violence to tackle offender behaviour. Outreach work was undertaken with community partners such as GPs but this could be further extended into schools. Karina Wane added that a range of education projects had been previously supported for priority schools focusing on domestic violence and agreed that it would be beneficial to undertake additional outreach work with schools.

RESOLVED:

- i) That Cabinet be recommended to support increased outreach work with the borough's schools as part of the existing Anti-Domestic Violence Strategy, in order to take a preventative approach to potential future offending and assist in the early identification of pupils experiencing issues of domestic violence at home;
- ii) That an update report regarding i) be provided to the committee at a future meeting.

6. **Task group report on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

The Chair informed the committee that the Chair of the Task Group had been unable to attend the meeting and welcomed James Curtis (Scrutiny and Policy

Officer) to the meeting to introduce the report. James Curtis advised that the task group had been established to examine how the council could grow and enhance the power of small and medium sized enterprises (SME) in the borough.

Councillor Tatler (Lead Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment and Skills) welcomed the report and the focus on SME in the borough. Members heard that SMEs increasingly represented a key source of employment and the Council had an important role in supporting businesses and helping to create environments in which they could flourish in the borough. The recommendations of the task group were thorough and would be taken forward. With regard to the recommendation regarding business champions, it was considered that the best advocate would be the Brent Business Board.

At the invitation of the Chair, Matthew Dibben (Head of Employment Skills and Enterprise) provided a brief response to the recommendations set out in the task group report. The committee heard that the focus on the sub-region of West London was important and the council worked closely with the West London Alliance and West London Business. Work was currently underway to develop an enterprise pathway for Brent Start, the council's adult education service. The council was also working with the Brent Business board and Brent Start and Further Education providers to ensure that education providers were responsive to the skills requirements of the employment market and to avoid duplication in the offer between FE providers and Brent Start. The College of Northwest London was currently offering manufacturing qualifications and higher level and degree level apprentices but there were still gaps in certain sectors such as engineering. The council could play a role in ensuring that there was affordable work space available for rent in the borough to support business incubation.

The committee discussed the recommendations of the task group and subsequently raised a number of queries which included seeking further information about the West London Brand, exploring the role of governors in supporting entrepreneurial pathways in schools and how Brent could attract industry to the borough given the expenses associated with being located in London. Members also questioned the level of feedback from Brent Works (a free service provided by the council to assist residents in finding employment and apprenticeship opportunities) and the role of the Chamber of Commerce in Brent. During its discussion, the committee emphasised the importance of the availability of start-up and small scale funding for businesses as well as the accessibility of working space on a flexible or ad-hoc basis.

Responding to the committee's queries, Councillor Tatler advised that the West London economic activity was the biggest in London, after the City of London and the West London Brand sought to support inwards investment, education and skills in the region. This was a growing initiative and businesses could buy into associated support mechanisms offered by West London Business. Work could be done to support governing bodies to consider how their school curriculums could foster entrepreneurial initiative in young people and this was perhaps best targeted at primary schools initially. Matthew Dibben advised that Brent Works had brokered approximately three hundred jobs over the last two years. Brent Works also signposted residents to other providers such as Brent Start to enable access to other stepping stones into work and statistics on this could be shared with the committee following the meeting. West London Business acted as the chamber of

commerce for all of West London and the North London Chamber of Commerce was based in Harrow; the Council worked with both of these. It was acknowledged that access to finance for SMEs was vital and the council played an important role in both signposting to and providing sources of investment. SMEs could be supported to access less traditional forms of investment such as crowd funding and a business case for developing support services around this was being explored by the council.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet be recommended to endorse the four recommendations of the Task Group as set out in the Task Group Report on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Brent.

7. Update on the committee's work programme 2016-17

The committee noted the update report on the committee's work programme for 2016/17.

8. Any other urgent business

None.

9. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was subject to confirmation at the Annual Council meeting on 17 May 2017.

The meeting closed at 9pm

M KELCHER
Chair

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**Resources and Public Realm
Scrutiny Committee
11 July 2017**

**Report from the Director of Performance,
Policy and Partnerships**

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee 2017-18 Work Programme

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the scope of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's draft work programme for the next municipal year 2017-18. The work programme covers a broad range of items and policy areas across corporate resources, regeneration and environment, transport and community safety and was selected by members of the committee based on criteria for effective scrutiny. It also sets out the remit for the committee and its responsibilities for scrutiny.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to discuss and agree the report and the work programme set out in Appendix A.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Scrutiny is a member-led process which looks at the performance of Brent Council and other organisations in the borough to ensure that they deliver good quality services to local residents. The role is to challenge effectively and the committee endorses the principles of effective scrutiny which have been developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. They are to provide a 'critical friend' challenge to Cabinet, be independent-minded, drive improvement in public services, and finally to provide a voice for concerns of the public and Brent's communities. The committee sets out to do this in a constructive way.

4.0 Remit

- 4.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee's remit is to scrutinise a broad range of services provided by the local authority including corporate resources, (including Customer Services, Policy, Partnerships and Performance, Procurement and IT) as well as regeneration, regulatory services, environment, transport and community safety as well as scrutiny of Brent's partners such as the Police. Its remit covers the portfolio areas of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for

Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills, Cabinet Member for Environment and Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities.

4.2 Under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 local authorities are required to appoint at least one committee to provide overview and scrutiny. The committee is also responsible for scrutinising the partnership work of the Safer Brent Partnership and receives their annual reports each year.

4.3 The committee has its own chair and vice-chair and is made up of six other elected members. In accordance with the council's Standing Orders, there are no co-opted members for the Resources and Public Realm.

5.0 2017-18 work programme

5.1 In order to scrutinise effectively and to co-ordinate its activities with the Cabinet's forward plan of decision-making the committee has agreed its own work programme for 2017-18. These include the items it will discuss at committee and its three task groups for the municipal year.

5.2 Members have decided on items which best suit the criteria for effective scrutiny in Brent. It is up to the committee to select the items for inclusion in its work programme, however ideas were brought together from a number of sources to assist members in their choices.

5.3 Ideas included suggestions from service areas, performance and budget monitoring information, the Cabinet forward plan. There are also a number of statutory items which have to be on the committee's work programme such as annual complaints report and the annual report on the Safer Brent Partnership. The Work programme remain fluid with the flexibility to priorities items of significant borough wide importance; and where officers and the chair agree changes.

5.4 Ideas and suggestions were judged against key criteria for inclusion in the scrutiny committee's work programme. These include:

- clear alignment with priorities set out in the Borough Plan and Brent 2020 Vision.
- outcomes and benefits which can be delivered by the intervention of scrutiny.
- is there a major council policy or strategy to be agreed by the Cabinet seeking contribution from scrutiny.
- subject is related to underperformance of a service where the intervention of scrutiny would enable an improvement in performance.
- the issue being scrutinised can directly be influenced by the actions of the council – i.e. is not a review of national policy over which the council is unlikely to be able to exert any influence.
- there is clear evidence that the subject is of significant public concern and merits the consideration of scrutiny.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

8.0 Diversity Implications

8.1 There are no diversity implications immediately arising from this report.

Background Papers

None

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Director Performance Policy and Partnerships

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Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017-18

Tuesday 11 July 2017

Agenda Rank	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny committee 2017-18 Forward Plan	Committee to review and agree programme of work and forward plan for 2017-18	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair of the R&PR Scrutiny Committee	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
2.	Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17	Committee to review and agree the 2016-17 annual report for publishing	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair of the R&PR Scrutiny Committee	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
3.	Strategic overview of the Council's Funding	A presentation on the council's wider funding and what the council is planning to do to adapt to changes in the way local government is funded	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources
4.	Food banks and poverty Task Group Scoping Report	Scoping document on Poverty task group, to be approved by committee.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader Cllr Roxane Mashari, Task Group Chair	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Tuesday 5 September 2017

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Outcome Based Reviews (OBR's)	<p>Update from 2016-17 OBRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Support & Welfare • Regeneration <p>Emerging findings from 2017-18 OBRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gangs • Domestic violence <p>Also review how the OBRs process has worked</p>	<p>Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills</p> <p>Cllr Tom Miller, Cabinet Members Stronger Communities</p>	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
2.	Follow up review on Brent high street initiatives	<p>A report on how uniformed litter patrol officers are performing after being brought in-house.</p> <p>An analysis on how have the town centre managers performed since being appointed and how the Digital High Street project performed</p> <p>*Visit to high street(s) with managers to see how they work?</p>	Cllr Eleanor Southwood, Cabinet Member Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
3.	Update on S106 and Community Infrastructure Task Group	A report (with RAG rating) providing an update on recommendations made by the task group in July 2016	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
4.	Update on The Devolution of Business Rates Task Group	A report and RAG'ed report providing an update on recommendations made by the task group in November 2016	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources

Tuesday 7 November 2017

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Annual Report on Complaints 2016/17	Committee to receive update on the councils 2016-17 complaints performance.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
2.	Welfare and Benefits - Vulnerable people	What are the welfare and benefits factors that decide if someone is "vulnerable"? Are these the right factors? What other factors do other Councils use to meet this definition in other areas? *Visit to meet relevant groups and residents?	Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member Housing and Welfare Reform	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources
3.	Community access strategy	Pre-scrutiny of forthcoming strategy; analysis to ensure devised in a way which allows access to all the residents of Brent. Look at digital element of the strategy and how technology is being used to best effect.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources
4.	Food banks and poverty Task Group Report	Finding and recommendations on the task group review of Food Banks and poverty.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader Cllr Roxane Mashari, Task Group Chair	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Tuesday 9 January 2018

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Budget Scrutiny Report	Committee to scrutinise and agree the Scrutiny Budget report for 2019-20 and 2020-2021.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources
2.	The resident experience	Analysis on the experience of our residents interacting with the Council; explanation of the Brent "Customer Promise" and customer service standards. Discussion, should we call people who use our services "customers" or "residents" or something else? *Focus group with resident groups/associations	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
3.	Recycling rates	Analysis of Brent's recycling rates. How does our performance compare to other authorities? What can we do reduce food waste in the recycling stream? What new technology could be deployed to improve recycling? *Visit to local recycling facility to see how it works	Cllr Eleanor Southwood Cabinet Member Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
4.	Trading standards	Analysis on the role of trading standards in 2017. Are we targeting the correct areas? What do the public want trading standards to do? *Afternoon shadowing a trading standards operative	Cllr Eleanor Southwood Cabinet Member Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Wednesday 21 February 2018

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Employment and employability in Brent	Invitation to the DWP to come to scrutiny. Analysis of their role, in partnership with the council, for boosting employment in Brent Focus on the DWP Brent officers to provide context where possible, specifically about the Jobcentre closures in Brent and how impact will be mitigated.	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
2.	Property and assets	Are we getting the most out of our assets? List of all property owned by the council for the committee. *Site visit to properties the Cttee identify as of interest ahead of the meeting	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources
3.	Social regeneration	Analysis on whether Brent policies for ensuring our regeneration projects have a positive social impact? What is our vision for the Wembley regeneration? *Visit to a regeneration project	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
4.	Community cohesion task group scoping Report	Scoping document on community cohesion task group, to be approved by committee.	Task Group Chair Cllr Tom Miller, Stronger Communities	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Monday 26 March 2018

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/External organisations
1.	Annual Safer Brent Partnership Report 2016/17	Annual report of the Safer Brent Partnership and update on community safety. *Borough Commander	Cllr Tom Miller, Stronger Communities	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Police
2.	Community Cohesion task group Report	Finding and recommendations on the task group review of community cohesion.	Task Group Chair Cllr Tom Miller, Stronger Communities	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
3.	Engagement and Consultation Review	A report on the emerging findings from the Engagement and Consultation review.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
4.	Update on The Small & Medium Enterprise Task Group	A report and RAG'ed report providing an update on recommendations made by the task group in May 2017.	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment



**Resources and Public Realm
Scrutiny Committee
11 July 2017**

**Report from the Director of Performance,
Policy and Partnerships**

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

2016-17 Annual Scrutiny Report

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Annual Scrutiny report is a summary of the work conducted by the Scrutiny function throughout the year. This includes task group work, questions and decisions made by both the Community and Wellbeing and Resources and Public Realm committees.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee are asked to agree the 2016-17 Annual Scrutiny Report.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The report is split into two sections C&WB and R&PR and provides an overview of the reports heard by the committees in 2016-17 and the range across the Cabinet portfolios. The report also summarises the various task group work that the scrutiny committees have undertaken throughout the year.

- 3.2 Each section also summarises Call in's, the committee recommendations and the committee's work and contribution to setting the council's budget. Finally the report summarises the committee's engagement with the public and its wider networks.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 None

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 None

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Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17

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Introduction



The challenge for scrutiny is to focus on the important issues. In local government there are always many competing priorities to deal with and the challenges faced by NHS colleagues are also enormous. So, the last year for my scrutiny committee was about looking at decision-making in the areas which matters most to the priorities of the council and the Cabinet, and which are also of great concern to the borough's residents. As this report shows, we spent a lot of time in committee reviewing these issues, ranging from council housing management to school standards, NHS transformation, and landlord licensing.

We dedicated time to looking at some issues in great depth by setting up task and finish groups. I think the task group on Signs of Safety was excellent in developing recommendations for the Cabinet as have been the task groups on housing associations and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). I'm looking forward to seeing this year how the recommendations are implemented. We have been very proactive in getting out and talking to residents and community groups and hearing from organisations such as Healthwatch Brent at committee. I would like to thank everybody who has contributed, and played their part. Finally, I would also like to thank our co-opted members for their contribution and in particular Dr Jeff Levison who has stepped down from scrutiny after many years of service.

Cllr Ketan Sheth, Chair of Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny is most effective when it is strategically planned. This is exactly what we set out to achieve during the first year of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee. In its simplest form this has meant themed meetings. More significantly, it has also meant three task group investigations which come together over a year to tell a single story.



Choosing the subject of this story came down to an obvious choice. When the retention of business rates is fully devolved to local authorities in the next couple of years it will be the biggest reform to council funding in three decades. All the residents of Brent will benefit if the council understand the implications of this change and is in a position to take advantage of the reform. As far as we can tell, Brent is the only council to carry out a full investigation into Business Rates devolution and the report has not only influenced the strategy of our council but has also been presented to other authorities at wider scrutiny meetings. Our Budget Scrutiny Panel report also looked in detail at these themes, and our final Task Group of the year examined ways we could help Brent's small businesses to grow and therefore maximise our Business Rates base. Of course, we also investigated a myriad of other issues – from development and planning strategies, to complaints against the council and civic enterprise – but taking this strategic direction, and focussing on an important subject from three different angles allowed us to add value to Brent over the last year.

Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair of Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

Part One: Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

1. Work programme 2016/17

The 2016/17 work programme looked at a range of policy areas in the committee's remit, including adult social care, children's services, education, health, housing, and public health. The work programme was largely agreed at the start of the municipal year to allow members to map out and plan their activities. It also built in enough capacity to ensure there was the flexibility to respond to events as they arise and space for issues that Brent's residents may suggest over the year. The work programme included scrutiny – holding Cabinet members to account – as well as policy development by task groups which developed recommendations for the Cabinet.

1.1. Housing

Housing was a sizable area of work. On 20 July 2016, Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee focused on housing issues, discussing reports on **landlord licensing**, Brent's **Ethical Lettings Agency** and the scrutiny task group report on Brent's **housing associations**, which was chaired by Councillor Tom Miller. Brent has three landlord licensing schemes: additional, selective and mandatory. It was clear to members that **landlord licensing** has varied widely in its effectiveness. Selective licensing in the three wards where selective licensing was introduced has been the most successful and the number of properties licensed exceeded the initial estimates of the number which require a licence. There was more detailed discussion of the implementation of the schemes, and a number of recommendations made to Cabinet. Cllr Sheth joined the council officers, as they undertook inspections of suspected properties in Kingsbury to better understand the policy, the process involved and the impact.

Officers and the Cabinet member updated the committee on the **Ethical Lettings Agency**. In 2015 the council had asked Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) to lead on establishing the agency. The committee heard that the proposal had not been viewed as viable by Brent Housing Partnership, but that a number of other projects had been brought forward. It is now intended to wait for details of a London-wide letting agency being developed by the Mayor of London. Again recommendations were made to the Cabinet.

On 23 November there was a report to committee about **Housing Needs Services** and vulnerable clients. Audit Committee made a recommendation that following an Ombudsman's report into housing a vulnerable person scrutiny should review what improvements the Housing Needs service had made in working with vulnerable people affected by domestic violence. At the meeting, scrutiny members sought details of the training put in place to improve awareness within the Housing Needs Service of domestic violence policies and the feedback mechanisms employed to provide ongoing assurance that this training was sufficient. Clarification was sought on

whether the options in the report were open to private tenants and homeowners as well as Brent Housing Partnership tenants. Again, recommendations were made.

Probably the largest area of housing overview and scrutiny was at a special committee meeting on 19 October 2016 which discussed the options for the **management of housing services**.

Committee made sure that tenants and leaseholders of Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) were aware of the special meeting taking place on 19 October, and it was promoted at the BHP Talkback forum and on social media. Members were pleased that the meeting had a very high turnout of members of the public with 25 people attending and six residents also made contributions at the meeting. Before the committee meeting members visited housing which was managed by Brent Housing Partnership. Committee made a number of recommendations to Cabinet after a very detailed discussion involving the Cabinet member for Housing and Welfare Reform and senior officers. One of the recommendations was around scrutiny of this function in the future if the service was returned in-house. To explore further an in-house option, the council set up Brent Housing Partnership Member and Residents Board, of which Cllr Sheth is a member.

1.2. Health

The Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has a statutory remit to scrutinise health services. At committee in September 2016 there was a review of the **Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)**. Members received a report from the Chief Executive of Brent Council and the Chief Officer of Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) about the STP. Also attending the committee meeting and contributing to the discussion were the Chief Officer, Brent Harrow Hillingdon CCGs, Healthwatch Brent, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing, Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing, and the Director of Strategy, London North West Healthcare NHS Trust. Members questioned the extent to which Brent had been able to influence the setting of local priorities within the STP and asked about engagement activity.

Another area of health scrutiny was the **NHS estate in Brent**. In November last year there was the presentation of a report about the estate in the borough. Officers from NHS Property Services also attended the meeting. Members queried whether the reorganisation of the NHS had posed difficulties for developing the NHS estate, whether the facilities comprising the estate were in a good condition and how well-situated they were to meet the needs of the borough. A further query was raised regarding whether the Clinical Commissioning Group had any discretion regarding the national policy of charging market rents. NHS Property Services advised that the move to charge market rent for NHS buildings was determined by Department for Health and NHS England policy. Committee heard that out-of-hospital hubs were identified in 2014 and reflected a practical assessment of where there was scope for extension in the NHS estate. The locations and numbers of the hubs were being reviewed as part

of the work between Brent CCG and the council. A number of recommendations were made by the committee.

There has been more engagement with **Healthwatch Brent** who again attended the committee on 23 November 2016 to contribute to the discussion on NHS estate in Brent. This follows their attendance on 20 September 2016. Committee is planning to do more visits to NHS services in the borough and is planning a visit to the A&E department at Northwick Park in the future. Brent also takes part in and contributes to the North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Sheth is Brent's representative on the committee which is made up of seven London boroughs.

1.3. Adult Social Care

The September meeting heard reports on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan and **New Accommodation for Independent Living (NAIL)** project. A report updating the committee on the project was introduced by the Operational Director Social Care. Committee heard that the project was the largest and most strategically important efficiency and quality improvement initiative in the Adult Social Care. It aimed to identify, develop and acquire alternative forms of care to residential care for all vulnerable adult client groups in Brent.

Outcomes for people going into residential care were not as good as for those who remained in their own communities and the NAIL project sought to address this by supporting people in an independent living setting, allowing them to remain in a home of their own, or in their own communities. It was emphasised that independent living was not a prescriptive model of service design and could look very different for different people with different levels of care and support needs. The project had been active for two years.

The committee heard that NAIL was the largest and most strategically important efficiency and quality improvement initiative within the Adult Social Care Department, and that it aimed to identify, develop and acquire alternative forms of care to residential care for all vulnerable adult client groups in the borough. The project had been active for two years and the report before the committee outlined areas of learning, detailed mitigating actions taken and progress so far.

1.4. Safeguarding

In November 2016, committee received the annual report of Brent Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The LSCB report, which was presented by the Independent Chair, was questioned by members who queried the effectiveness of the relationships between different agencies across Brent, how this compared with other London boroughs and the powers of the Board to challenge organisations. Questions were raised regarding the involvement of local communities and plans for wider engagement. The committee sought the Independent Chair's view on the safety of children in Brent who were at risk from harm, the efficacy of Brent professionals at

recognising children at risk and the safeguarding performance of Brent's schools. A number of recommendations were made.

In February 2017, the committee discussed the annual report of the Brent Safeguarding Adults' Board, which was presented by the Independent Chair, and reviewed its work for 2015-16. Also attending the committee meeting, and taking part in the discussion, were the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Strategic Director for Community Wellbeing. The 2015/16 Annual Report provided a summary of safeguarding activity which had been carried out by the Board's partners across the social care, health and criminal justice sectors in Brent, and focused on four major areas: prevalence of abuse; multi-agency response to safeguarding risks; the Board's strategic priorities; and learning from case reviews to improve safeguarding practice.

At committee members had a wide-ranging discussion with the Independent Chair about levels of commitment from statutory partners, the opportunities for local community and voluntary organisations to get involved in the work of the Board and the overall strengths of partnership work in Brent. There was discussion about the involvement in the work of the Board by contractors who provide housing and adult social care services for Brent Council. In 2017/18, it is intended that the two safeguarding reports will be heard together at Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

1.5. Children's Services

A report reviewing school standards and achievement for 2015-2016 was discussed at committee in March 2017. Currently, 96 per cent of Brent schools are judged good or outstanding by Ofsted, well above the national average. The arrangements which had supported this improvement were outlined to the committee. Collaborative, school-led partnerships were now a key feature of Brent's education provision. These themes were discussed with a number of Brent headteachers who attended the meeting.

Members also had a wide-ranging discussion about a report outlining the progress made in delivering reforms to services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). These reforms were required following the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014 and a new SEND Code of Practice in 2015. Among the issues discussed included progress to the deadline for conversion to the new Education, Health and Care Plans, engagement with the borough's parents, strategic commissioning with health partners and identifying children with SEND and in providing effective support to improve outcomes and life chances.

1.6 Wellbeing and Public Health

Members of the committee organised an Air Quality workshop to discuss the council's new strategy and to feedback their views as part of the consultation process. The workshop focused on the public health aspects of poor air quality and what the local authority could do to encourage residents to make changes which improve air quality.

2. Task and Finish Groups

Time-limited task groups made up of a small group of councillors – and sometimes co-opted members – were set up during 2016/17 to look at a number of areas in detail by the committee. Each of the task groups developed recommendations from their work.

2.1. Housing associations

The objective for the task group, which was chaired by Councillor Tom Miller, was to gather evidence to develop a set of recommendations for the Cabinet. Rather than reviewing all the wide-ranging legislation, the task group's scope was limited to five areas: the Right to Buy extension, social housing supply, 1% social rent reduction, Pay to Stay, and partnerships with housing associations.

As part of their evidence gathering, members spoke to chief executives and senior officers of a number of housing associations operating in Brent including Apna Ghar, Genesis, Innisfree, Metropolitan, Network Homes and Origin. They also met with the then Cabinet Member for Housing and Development, Strategic Director Community Wellbeing, Operational Director Housing and Culture, and the Head of Housing Policy. To be able to understand the issues from different perspectives the task group members also spoke to the representatives from two tenants' organisations, the chief executive of a housing co-operative, the chair of a resident-managed housing association as well as two experts in housing policy.

Members of the task group were:

- Councillor Tom Miller (Chair)
- Councillor Janice Long
- Councillor Arshad Mahmood
- Councillor Orleen Hylton
- Councillor Jun Bo Chan
- Jacky Peacock OBE, Executive Director Advice4Renters.

The task group reported back to Cabinet in November 2016 with a number of recommendations.

2.2. Signs of Safety

The task group was set up to examine the effectiveness of the implementation of Signs of Safety by the Children and Young People's department since early 2015. Signs of Safety is a practice framework for working with children and families and child protection which was developed in Australia in the 1990s and is used today by a

number of children's services departments in local authorities in the United Kingdom as well as in the United States, Australia and Canada.

In 2014, Brent Council was awarded funding from the England Innovations Project, which is managed by the Department of Education, to introduce Signs of Safety as a practice model in children's services.

The scrutiny task group completed its report, which includes four recommendations. It held a number of meetings to help members better understand the challenges and opportunities of implementing of Signs of Safety in the Children and Young People's department, and gather evidence for the report. These meetings included discussions with front-line social workers and practitioners, senior officers and the Strategic Director as well as the Cabinet member for Children and Young People. Members of the task group were shown how the Signs of Safety approach works in practice. The full report will be discussed by Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee on 1 February. The recommendations will be presented to Cabinet

The members of the task group were:

- Cllr Aisha Hoda Benn, task group chair
- Cllr Dr Amer Agha
- Cllr Bhagwanji Chohan
- Cllr Suresh Kansagra
- Cllr Shama Tatler.

The task group reported back to Cabinet in March 2017.

2.3. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

This task group was set up to review the challenge of providing mental health services to Brent's young people. According to data based on national projections, it's thought that one in ten school-age children in Brent have a diagnosable mental health condition which equates to an estimated 4,575 children and young people. However, while early intervention can prevent crisis and the development of long-term mental health conditions in later life, national research suggests that only one in three of those with diagnosable conditions will access any form of mental health support.

The task group talked to providers of services in the borough, community representatives and local authority officers about CAMHS in Brent at present.

Members of the task group included:

- Cllr Ahmad Shahzad OBE, task group chair
- Cllr Ruth Moher
- Dr Jeff Levison, co-opted committee member
- Cllr Neil Nerva
- Hamza King, representative Brent Youth Parliament.

The task group will report back to Cabinet and health organisations this year.

3. Visits and engagement

Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has been committed to improving scrutiny by carrying out visits outside of formal committee meetings. This allowed members to see at first-hand how services are delivered, and speak with service users and residents about services. Visits have helped to complement the discussion which takes place at committee meetings, and accounts of the visits have been written up in a standing report to the committee so that there is publicly available information about what members did.

Last year, the committee members made a number of visits, including:

- August 2016, Landlord licensing raids in Kingsbury
- September 2016, Willow House in Wembley
- September 2016, Brent Housing Partnership services
- March 2017, Northwick Park Hospital

Members of the committee will also be organising more visits in the future. The committee regards the work it does outside of committee meetings as highly important. It gives scrutiny the ability to respond to changing events as they happen, and takes the committee out of the formal environment of the civic centre. It hopes to develop this further in 2017/18.

Also, special mention should be given to a meeting of Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) at the civic centre on 30 July with a Scrutiny Officer to do a presentation on Scrutiny. Cllr Sheth was invited back to BYP to do a 'hot seat' event to answer questions from BYP members.

As part of European Local Democracy Week 2016, the chair hosted a first Scrutiny Café at coffee shop in central Wembley in October. The café allowed residents to meet with the chair face-to-face and suggest ideas for scrutiny. It also helped to take scrutiny out of the formal atmosphere of the civic centre. Also, European Local Democracy Week from 10 to 16 October. Cllr Sheth spoke to pupils at the Winston Churchill Lycee in Wembley about local democracy, participation and scrutiny and also took part in a phone-in on K2K Radio on the same topics with Councillor Matt Kelcher.

In addition, scrutiny has been making use of social media to enhance its accountability and transparency. The committee has been using Twitter to update residents about what it's been doing and to engage with organisations.

Cllr Sheth has also written columns for a number of newspapers about the work of the committee and contributed a guest blog to the e-newsletter produced by the Centre for Public Scrutiny about the task group on Signs of Safety and what lessons the committee learned.

The Chair of Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and a Scrutiny Officer also attended Brent Connects area forums last year to do a presentation on the committee's work because it was important to explain the new dual scrutiny committee structure which was agreed by Full Council in March 2016, and the role of scrutiny

within the local authority more generally. The engagement with residents at those meetings was good – and lively at times – and residents were given the opportunity to put forward their ideas. Meetings attended included:

- June 2016, Brent Connects Willesden
- June 2016, Brent Connects Kenton and Kingsbury
- July 2016, Brent Connects Wembley
- July 2016, Brent Connects Kilburn.

4. Wider Scrutiny Networks

Members of the committee have been involved with scrutiny networks and organisations outside Brent. One of the most important of these has been the London Scrutiny Network, which is made up of representatives of scrutiny committees from a number of London boroughs. Cllr Sheth attended a number of these meetings during 2016/17.

The committee has also built links with the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). Cllr Sheth attended the centre's annual conference on 1 December 2016, which this year was on the theme of democracy and governance and was attended by members from local authorities nationally. Cllr Sheth presented at one of the workshops on the theme of scrutinising complex relationships, highlighting the best practice used in Brent.

On 8 December 2016 the (CfPS) organised a Health Accountability Forum which was attended by scrutiny members and organisations involved in health scrutiny, including a member of Brent's Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Officer. The forum, which was in part an update about health policy, included presentations on the state of adult social care by a policy adviser from the Local Government Association. There was also a presentation about the Independent Reconfiguration Panel – the body which review proposals for changes to NHS services that are contested and advises the Secretary of State for Health. The NHS also gave a presentation about new models of care, including the 50 vanguard projects in place nationwide.

Finally, The Chair of the committee has also been involved with the Institute of Local Government (INLOGOV) at the University of Birmingham.

Part Two: Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee

5. Work programme 2016/17

The process of agreeing the annual work programme for the Resources and Public Realm Committee was greatly improved for 2016/17 with workshops organised for Scrutiny Members and Strategic Directors to design a relevant, focused and strategic annual work programme. The programme was agreed at the committee's first meeting and was kept under constant review through discussion between the committee Chair, Strategic Directors and the Head of Strategy and Partnerships. The 2016/17 work programme allowed for both scrutiny and overview covering a wide range of policy areas within the committee's remit, including regeneration, environment, 2017/18 – 2018/19 budget and resources. The committee also reviewed work of the Performance, Policy and Partnership Department, focusing on the prevent strategy and the Safer Brent Partnership update on community safety.

5.1. Regeneration and Environment

Development Management Policies

The Planning Policy and Projects Manager introduced the report which reminded the committee that on 16 January 2016 Full Council approved submission of the draft Development Management Policies Development Plan Document to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. Having taken account of all the representations, both in writing and at the Hearing, the Inspector advised the council to consult on proposed main modifications.

Members questioned ways of including in DMP 14 requirements for infrastructure provision at an early stage of housing development or at pre-planning stage; the definition of affordability in terms of housing and whether the levels were realistic, particularly for existing residents; and the mechanisms in place to reach the maximum target of 50% of housing in a major development to be affordable. Members also raised queries regarding the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation (OPDC) and the Mayor of London two month consultation. Member also requested that a representative of the OPDC attend the committee as part of the council's Planning Strategy.

The Council's Planning Strategy/OPDC

The Planning Policy and Projects Manager introduced the report which provided update on council's planning strategy and development of the local plan going forward. The current strategy is based on core strategy and its five key areas. It was explained that the service had been delivering significant housing. There was some discussion about making sure that all areas of the borough are included in development plans. It was also mentioned that the local plan needs updating, as the council stands the chance of increasingly losing planning appeals and developments. A representative from the OPDC gave a presentation on the development plans.

Members requested that scrutiny look at the use of compulsory purchase orders by council to acquire land to support development of housing to meet housing need. Members also requested an update to the committee following the quarterly meeting with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform in relation to the recommendations from the scrutiny task group regarding work with housing associations. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills also agreed to meet with the OPDC representative to discuss how surrounding areas can benefit from Section 106 funds.

Brent Road Resurfacing Strategy

The report was presented by the Head of Highways and Infrastructure. It was explained that the council experienced a high demand from residents in a challenging financial climate. It was stated that most of these were short term measures and last year's budget found £200,000 to target worst areas, and in this budget a further £2 million to accelerate road repairs, included patching. Members had been extensively involved in looking at priorities for action.

Members queried the quality of the works carried out and how to ensure that Brent will not have the same problems recurring. Members also raised the issue of damage caused to pavements by local businesses and to roads by TFL. Members asked about how works were prioritised and how this was communicated to residents. Members requested that the Committee be provided with performance data for a six-month period regarding timeliness for contractors' performance for highway repair. Officers were asked to test FAQs and automated responses with community groups.

Update on the implementation of recommendations from the CCTV Scrutiny Task Group

The Head of Community Protection presented the report and gave an update of the progress made against each of the 21 recommendations the task group had made. Members queried if the council could achieve more from S106 or CIL money and working closely with other partners and housing providers. Members also suggested working closely with schools and open days to educate about CCTV. It was agreed that the Community safety team would explore the viability of CCTV open day and report back to the committee. It was also agreed that officers would explore the potential for capital investment.

Update on the implementation of recommendations from the Fly Tipping Scrutiny Task Group

The Head of Environmental Improvement presented the update report to the committee stating that there some issues had arisen, such as the pilot with Kingdom Security Ltd. It was stated that the pilot is going well, but that it is still early days, the council is encouraging Kingdom to focus on both simple litter offences but trying to move them into more localised issues such as palm spitting. It was also explained that there is a need focus on working with landlords much more. There is also a service review to address what has become an unsustainable bulky waste collection process.

Members queried using other social media and creating a cross council database of community groups. Members also discussed ensuring that literature is in simple language that residents can understand. Members also wanted to know what communication and outreach Veolia carry out on a monthly basis.

Report for Scrutiny on Brent's High Streets

Cllr Tatler and Cllr Southwood presented the report. All seventeen high streets in Brent are an important aspect of its character. The report presented the importance of the cleanliness of the high streets, and how it reflects both to residents and to visitors of the borough. The council is aiming to make Brent cleaner, to make feel better about their surroundings and improve their quality of life. Currently the cleaning service is provided by Veolia who aim to provide a Grade A standard of no litter or refuse being left behind and that this would be constantly monitored. Timed Waste collections will take place, together with collections of commercial waste and Brent will be introducing a 12 month trial of local Litter Patrols. A focus is being made on Wembley High Road for regeneration to fund improvements including the delivery of a vision for the new Town Centre, and the Town Centre Management Plan. Other current projects include the development of properties in the area including the disposal of various buildings, improvement to the existing urban square, and landscaping and planting trees.

Environmental Sustainability

A report summarising the work undertaken across key service areas to address the issue of sustainability was introduced to the committee by Councillor Southwood (Lead Member for Environment). The report was wide ranging and addressed seven key areas: transport and travel; air quality; in-house carbon management; street lighting and parking; public realm and waste; parks and biodiversity; and, flood risk management. The committee also welcomed representatives from the Environment Agency, Lee James (Team leader, London West Partnerships and Strategic Overview Team) and Edward Crome (Lead for engagement with Brent on planning matters) who outlined the borough's flood risks and explained the structures in place for responding to these.

Members questioned plans the council had to regenerate areas with persistently poor air quality, address traffic congestion in the borough and tackle proposals to include an incinerator in the Brent Cross Cricklewood development. They also discussed charges on diesel vehicles. Further questions were posed regarding the contractual arrangements for disposal of residual waste, referring to a BBC report which listed Brent as the second worst borough in London for fly-tipping. Members questioned whether there was insufficient targeting of enforcement activity and sought details of the level of evidence required to pursue prosecution.

Pre-Cabinet Scrutiny of Proposals Relating to Tackling Illegal Rubbish Dumping and Litter with Uniformed Street Patrols

Councillor Southwood (Lead Member for Environment) presented a draft report which would be finalised and submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 13 March 2017. The report

reviewed the uniformed street patrol pilot which had been undertaken with Kingdom Security Ltd, outlined the available options for taking the service forward from June 2017 and concluded that the creation of an in-house service would be the most advantageous of these options.

In the ensuing discussion, several queries were raised by the committee including whether formal minutes had been taken of discussions between officers and Kingdom Security Ltd. Further information was sought regarding the intended balance of enforcement activity for minor littering offences with larger-scale illegal rubbish dumping and how amending this relationship could affect the viability of the model. Members questioned whether Kingdom Security Ltd were London Living Wage accredited, whether the anticipated wages for an in-house team were appropriate, and if the proposed future model was the best option.

5.2. Resources

Brent Council's financial position

The Heads of Finance presented the current context of the council's financial position. The committee heard about local government sources of income, the likelihood of future reductions, Brent's financial position as at February 2016, budget savings previously agreed, further savings required, and the impact of Council Tax changes and also new legislation.

Members in discussion raised questions on the increasing Council Tax base and the impact on collection rates, the effect of business rate devolution on new services, the protection of existing services and how schools could protect special educational needs provision from forthcoming Dedicated Schools Grant restrictions proposed under the review of the national funding formula.

Income Generation

The Strategic Director of Resources delivered a presentation detailing all the on the progress made towards delivering the Civic Enterprise Strategy. This includes details on activity undertaken to address the savings targets and how business plans can add value to improving outcomes for the borough as well as meeting financial targets. It was stated that given the pace and scale of the financial cuts the council is facing, if we want to protect the services residents care about the most, then we need to create new income streams and find ways to save money.

Update on Community Access Strategy/Customer Care & Access*

The Director of Brent Customer Services delivered a presentation detailing Brent's vision for transforming the way in which residents are able to access information, advice and services. The report provided Scrutiny Members with a summary of the Community Access Strategy agreed by Cabinet on 15 October 2014 and the progress that has been made in implementing the strategy. The committee discussed some of the key achievement such as call rates and areas for improvement e.g. voice recognition systems. Members also enquired about mystery shoppers and ghosting to check the quality of the service offered.

Capital Programme and Investment Strategy

Cllr McLennan presented the report which gave an overview of whole Capital Programme in Brent, its current performance and an update on the Investment Strategy. The Committee also noted the present and future Capital Programme's budget, the reasons for the underspend in 2017 and the implementation of an action plan addressing the under-importance of the capital programme. The various portfolios (Schools, Housing, Estate Regeneration – South Kilburn, Highways and Infrastructure, Estate Regeneration – non-housing, and Corporate Landlord) which made up the Capital Programme were discussed - together with the risks which might affect the programme. An update was given of the investment strategy and also additions to the programme, which had been approved by Cabinet after the budget setting process had taken place. These included schemes approved in 2016 such as the Knowles House Scheme, London Road, Ujima House, and highway investment in the borough.

5.3. Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Annual Report on Complaints 2015/16

The Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships presented the report, providing an overview of complaints received by the council during the period April 2015 to March 2016. There was a focus on the high level data for the past 3 years which was included in the report where available for the purpose of comparison. A departmental/service area analysis was provided for the 2015 – 2016 operational year (based on the current structure). The headlines of the report were discussed, volume of complaints, the nature and reasons for complaints, outcomes, timeliness, compensation and ombudsman complaints.

PREVENT Programme

The committee received a report and introductory presentation on delivery of the Prevent programme in Brent. Kibibi Octave (Strategic Prevent Coordinator) highlighted that under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015, the council had a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The council approached this duty as a safeguarding concern, recognising the risks of grooming, extortion and harm that vulnerable people could be subject to. The requirements of the Prevent Statutory Guidance, including the requirement to conduct risk assessments and develop an action plan, were outlined to the committee.

In the subsequent discussion the Committee queried the use of terms such as 'pre criminal' and sought further details regarding engagement with Brent's Muslim community. Members emphasised the importance of engaging the whole of a community, including seeking women's voices and of supporting good governance of community groups and organisations, including supplementary schools. Further

questions were raised regarding any potential alignment with work relating to gang recruitment and activity and the provision of training to community leaders.

Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report and Update on Community Safety Safer partnership item.

This item was attended by Michael Gallagher (Borough Commander, Metropolitan Police), Councillor Miller (Lead Member for Stronger Communities), Karina Wane (Head of Community Protection) and Amar Dave (Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment). The committee questioned the work being undertaken to combat anti-Semitism and raised concerns regarding incidents of intimidating behaviour associated with religious sectarianism in Brent's Islamic communities. Referring to the statistics provided regarding hate crime in Brent, members sought further detail regarding the groups affected and questioned why there had been an increase in hate crime related to religion.

Members queried the procedure for information sharing with local councillors following the occurrence of a major crime in their wards. In view of the rising figures associated with anti-social behaviour and gang activity in Brent, the committee requested an overview of the work being undertaken to tackle such issues, including drug dealing and prostitution, and highlighted a number of hotspots of illegal activity in the borough. Members questioned which initiatives were pursued with the borough's schools, particularly around issues of domestic violence and violence against women and girls.

5.4. Call-in

Granville Centre, South Kilburn Development

Following a call-in by a number of backbench councillors, the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee met in a special meeting in December to consider plans for the Granville Centre as part of South Kilburn Development. The Committee decided not to refer the decision back to Cabinet but did make a series of key recommendations about how such projects could be better managed in future. These were:

- That the committee supports the continued use/occupation of the Carlton and Granville Centres Site by the Granville Plus Nursery School;
- That the Cabinet agree that the use of the Carlton and Granville Centres Site by the Granville Plus Nursery School should be paramount to any discussions regarding the future of the site;
- That the Cabinet agree to ensure that the Granville Plus Nursery be fully involved regarding the design of the facility;
- That the Cabinet agree that a twelve-month timetable detailing the collaborative process for determining the future development and use of the site, engaging all key stakeholders, be produced as soon as possible in association with the

council's partners in the project, the South Kilburn Trust and the Greater London Assembly;

- That the twelve-month timetable be presented to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in three months' time;
- That the Constitutional Working Group consider establishing a formal mechanism to capture Ward Member consultation in any significant decisions affecting their areas, ensuring that Ward Members have sufficient chance to review and comment on any proposals prior to Cabinet consideration;
- That the Constitutional Working Group consider a process to ensure that appropriate consultation has been conducted prior to significant decisions being undertaken and explore the possible inclusion of a 'stakeholder' section in Cabinet reports;
- That a report detailing in full the extent and nature of the collaboration between the council, the community and key stakeholders in the progression of the development of the Carlton and Granville Centres Site be provided to the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny committee in six months' time.

6. Task and Finish Groups

6.1. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106

Membership:

Cllr Harbi Farah (Chair)
Cllr Mary Daly
Cllr Wilhelmina Mitchell-Murray
Cllr Mili Patel
Cllr Chohan Bhagwanji
Mr Faraz Baber

The task group chair introducing the task group report, advised that the review was concerned with the CIL and S106 policies, engagement both with communities and members, funding collection and allocation. The committee commended the work and commitment of the Sudbury local residents, asked how lessons learned could be communicated to other areas through Brent Connects and workshops and it was suggested that a route map be prepared and circulated.

The committee discussed the former ward working funding as an alternative vehicle and were reminded that CIL had the advantage of being for the entire ward instead of for successful community group bidders. The committee agreed that the recommendations made by the task group be approved and the development of an action plan across the council and partner organisations to take these forward.

6.2. Devolution of Business Rates

Membership:

Cllr Joel Davidson (Chair)

Cllr Tom Miller
Cllr Bernard Collier
Cllr John Duffy
Cllr Neil Nerva
Cllr Helen Carr
Cllr Michael Maurice

Cllr Davidson, chair of the task group presented the task groups report. Firstly outlining the reasons why the task group was formed and the need for the council to be ahead of this policy development. The chair went on to describe the tasks group's methods for gathering evidence and its findings. It was stated that despite the lack of details available for this policy change, the task group were still able to formulate strong recommendations that would put the council in a position to respond positively to the Devolution of Businesses rates. Members of the task group Councillor's Duffy and Miller contributed to the discussion stating that this was a cross party piece of work and that the task group welcome the Devolution of Business rates and see it as a great opportunity for Brent. The Deputy Leader of the council welcomed the report and stated that there are areas within business development that the council is already working on and that the recommendations will support bringing all the work together. The task group made eleven recommendations that were all agreed by committee and endorsed by the Deputy Lead member, the report and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet for approval.

6.3. Budget 2017/18 Scrutiny Panel Report

Membership:

Cllr Matt Kelcher
Cllr Mili Patel
Cllr Shama Tatler
Cllr Ernest Ezeajughi
Cllr Joel Davidson
Cllr Ketan Sheth
Cllr Reg Colwill
Cllr Bhagwanji Chohan
Cllr Suresh Kansangra

Cllr Kelcher and Cllr McLennan presented the report which introduced the new budget scrutiny process. This included details on plans to increase the level of Council Tax in the area over the next few years that the Cabinet will be announcing a "demand-led" review of CPZs in Brent – should an issue be raised by local residents or the ward councillor – and with the aim of devising a new long-lasting parking policy. The Panel has identified areas of overspend in Adult Social Care and in Children and Young People's Departments – owing to the increasing demand for Social Care being unpredictable and the challenges of a changing democracy. All the detailed cuts and savings brought forward by the Cabinet have been considered, and further information has been requested accordingly. All of the areas where saving might be made which include in Adult Social Care, in Environmental Improvement, and in Regeneration. This was followed by the key recommendations.

6.4. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Membership

Cllr Sam Stopp (Chair)

Cllr Janice Long

The committee received a task group report on how the council can grow and enhance power of SMEs in the borough. Cllr Tatler welcomed this report and its focus on SMEs due to their importance as sources of employment. The Committee discussed businesses' online and high street presence and the council's role in supporting them to flourish in borough, as well as that of the West London Alliance and West London Business, and how the sub-region can promote and support investment. Members agreed the task group's recommendations on developing an SME support programme and a programme to improve skills, creating the role of business champion to advocate for SMEs, and investing in business incubation and support services. The report will be considered at Cabinet in July.

7. Visits and engagement

The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny committee believes that visiting sites and speaking with service users where possible, provides a real first hand insight when scrutinising these services. The Resources and Public Realm committee made a few visits in 2016/17.

- CCTV Control Room
- Brent High Streets
- Granville Centre, South Kilburn Development
- Stonebridge Estate

The Chair of Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee and a Scrutiny Officer also attended Brent Connects area forums in Harlesden to do a presentation and explain the new dual scrutiny committee structure which was agreed by Full Council in March 2016, and the role of scrutiny within the local authority more generally.

European Local Democracy Week from 10 to 16 October. Cllr Kelcher held a Scrutiny Café at the Ruboi Coffee Bar in Willesden, where he spoke to local residents about scrutiny. The chair also attended Newham Catholic College where he took part in a question and answer session with the Schools council and also took part in a phone-in on K2K Radio on the same topics with Councillor Ketan Sheth.

On the 18th November the Scrutiny function along with Children and Young People Services, took part in the 2016 Youth takeover day Challenge. Young people from across the borough took part in various challenges with a focus on democracy and scrutiny.

8. Wider Scrutiny Networks

Cllr Kelcher attended the annual conference of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) on 1 December 2016, which this year was on the theme of democracy and governance and was attended by members from local authorities nationally.

Appendix 1

Overview and Scrutiny Contacts

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This report was produced by the Policy and Scrutiny Team at Brent Council.

@Brent_Council #scrutinybrent

Strategic Financial Overview

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny
11 July 2017

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Agenda Item 7

Recent developments

- General election result has not resulted in a majority government
- Inherent political uncertainty which we need to manage within
- Unclear how local government finance will be impacted as a result
 - Local Government Finance Bill (business rates devolution)
 - Did not complete Parliamentary stages prior to the election
 - Not included in Queen's Speech post election
- Therefore, this presentation sets out:
 - Background to local authority finances for context
 - Summary of Brent's overall financial position
 - Key risks and issues for consideration

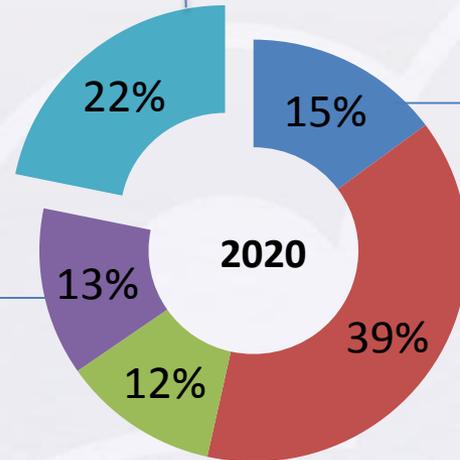
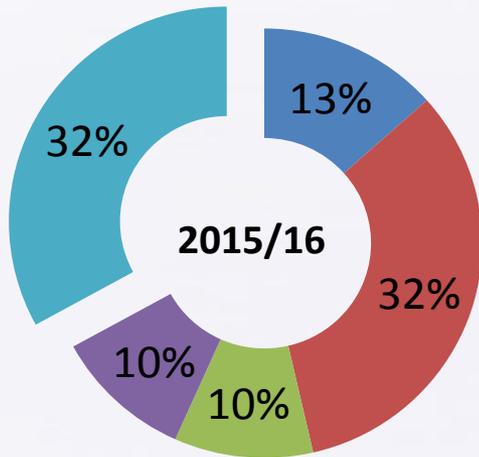
Strategic impact on our budget

We continue to meet our statutory obligations

All other services will need to reduce by a further 10%

- Children's Services
- Adult's services
- Streets & refuse
- Interest repayments

Demand for Adult's & Children's services increase



The main sources of local government finance

- **Revenue support grant**

- Based on central government assessment of relative need
- In 2014/15 provided 30% of funding
- Will be 10% by 2018/19 and falling to nil after 2020

- **Council tax**

- Can increase by 12% over 3 years 2017/18 to 2019/20
- 1% = approx. £1m, half of any increase ring-fenced to social care
- Brent agreed policy is 4% p.a. over this period

- **Business rates (NDR)**

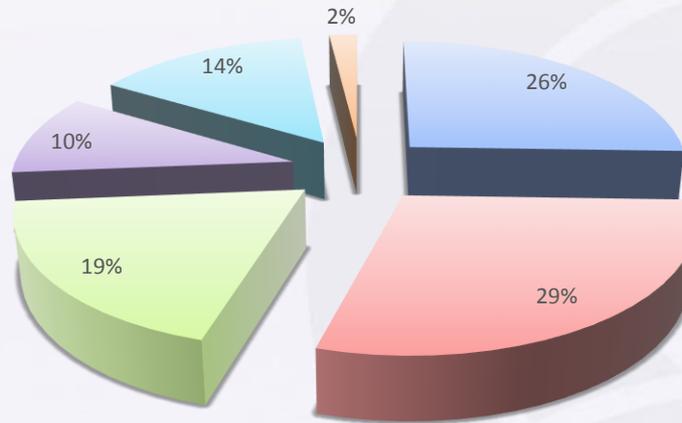
- NDR growth in London shared 30/37/33 (Brent, GLA, Treasury)
- Top ups and tariffs to equalise funding (the 'Westminster' effect)
- Rate and exemptions set centrally, can be influenced locally

- **Fees and charges**

- **Specific government grants**

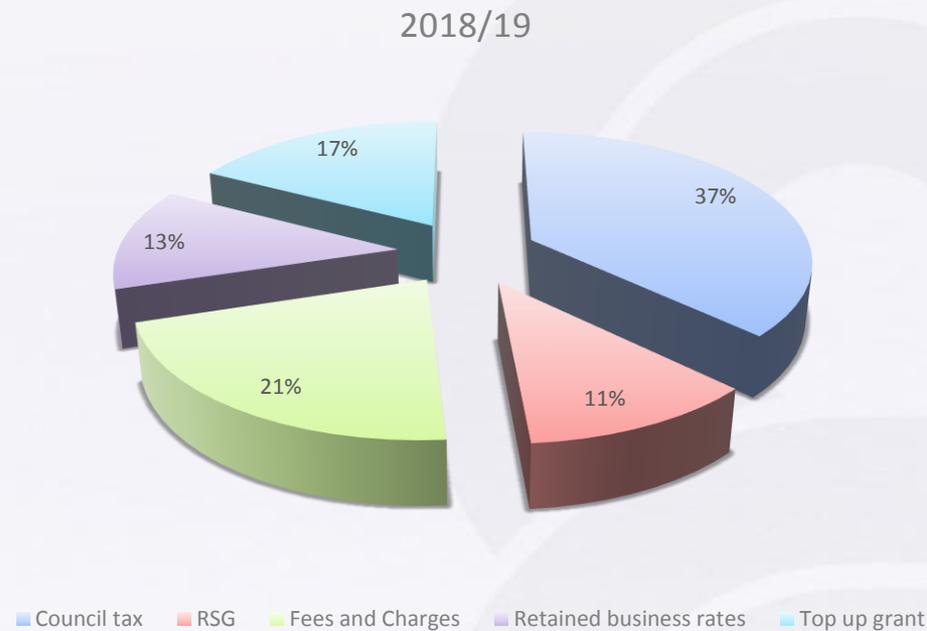
In 2014/15 RSG still provided nearly 30% of our funding; more than council tax (26%) and more than business rates (24%)

2014/15

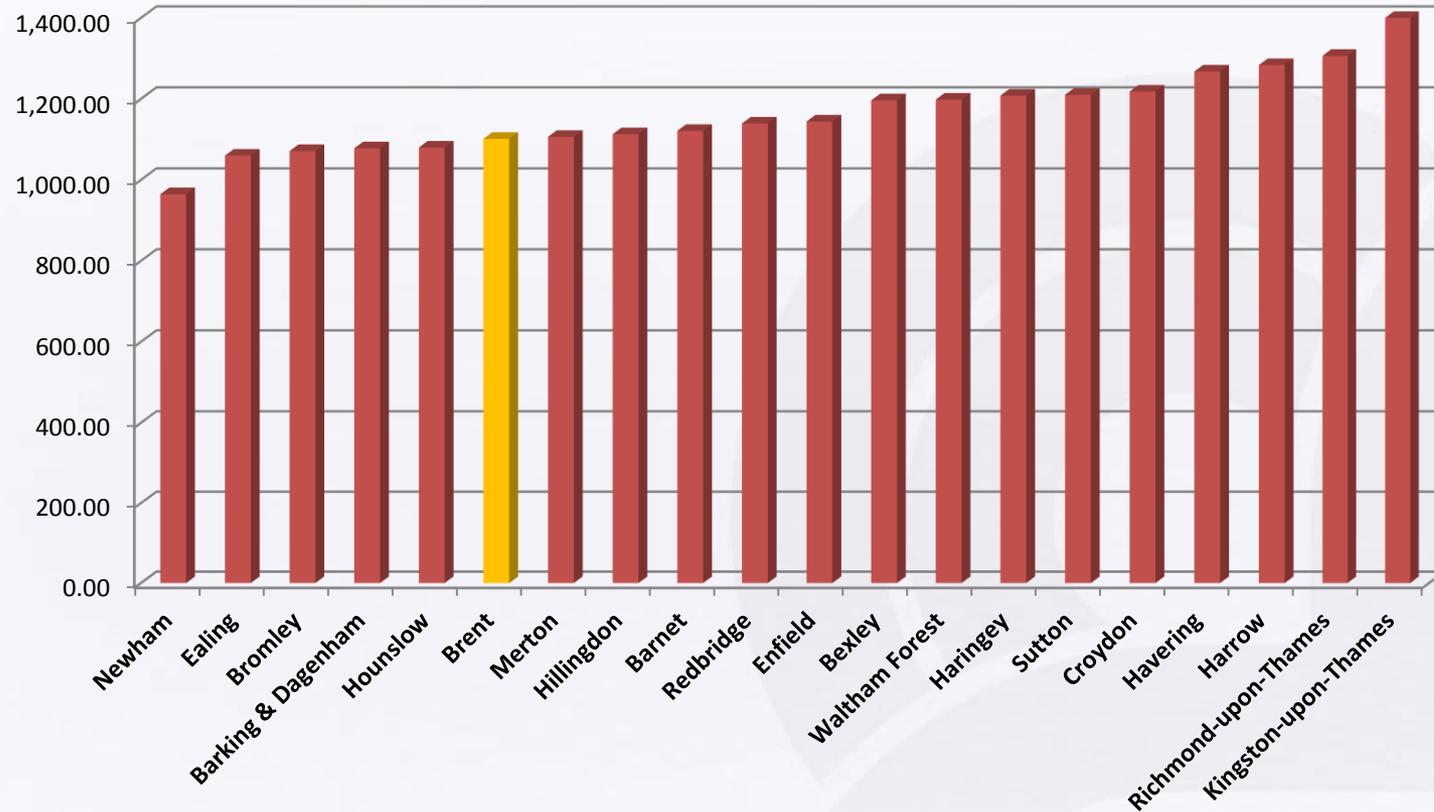


Council tax RSG Fees and Charges Retained business rates Top up grant New Homes Bonus

By 2018/19 RSG will barely provide 10% of our funding, less than half the amount we raise through fees and charges and a fraction of the amounts from local taxes

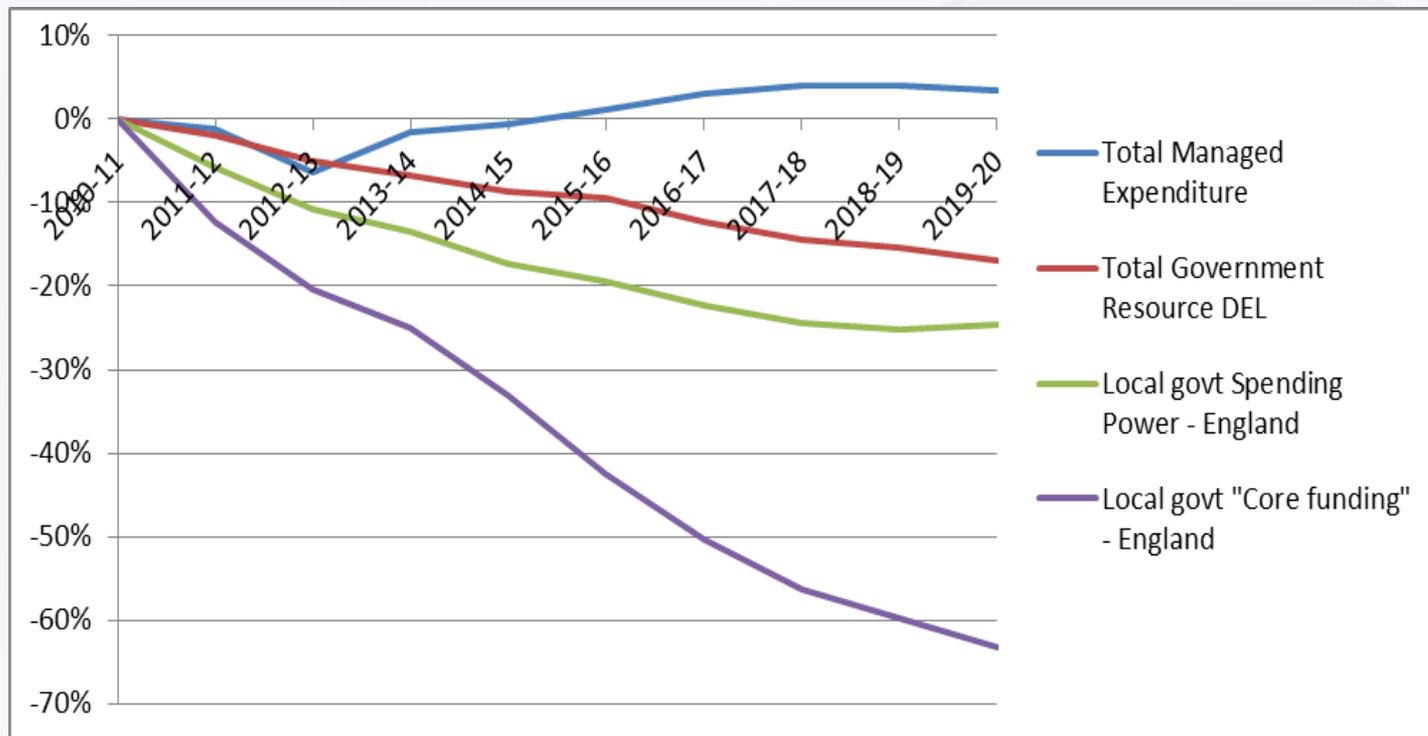


Relative council tax levels in outer London 2016/17



The gap between funding reductions for local government and the rest of the UK public sector continues to widen, with no obvious sign that this disparity is likely to change substantially

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Legal obligations in budgeting

- **Must hold budget and council tax setting meeting February 2018**
 - Must set balanced budget and council tax for 2018/19
 - Can set 'business plans' for 2019/20
 - Can't legally bind Council in February 2019
 - But can choose, for most practical purposes to set budget and council tax for 2019/20
- **Must hold budget and council tax setting meeting February 2019**
 - This can consider new savings and council tax proposals; or
 - This can formally adopt 'business plans' from February 2018

Current financial position

- **Balanced budget set for 2017/18**
 - Usual set of risks and issues to be managed through monitoring process
- **Proposals agreed in February 2017 to balance budget for 2018/19**
 - Requires formal adoption by Council in February 2018, including
 - Council tax increase of 4%
 - Procurement savings of £4.5m
 - Additional income through civic enterprise £1.25m
 - Full listing on council website
 - Usual technical caveats apply (e.g. no reductions to previously announced government funding, no sharp increase in inflation etc)
- **No substantial new budget process required to set lawful 2018/19 budget**
 - Most councils are still trying to identify savings for 2018/19
- Gap of c£13m remains to be bridged for 2019/20

.....budget gap (estimate @ February 2017)

Best estimate of the gap in February 2017 was £12.7m. This estimate will be revised and updated over the summer to take account of the factors set out below.

- **Demography.** The extent to which changing demographic trends will vary from those previously assumed, and so increase or decrease the assumed cost of providing services.
- **Macro-economic conditions.** The effect of changes to forecast rates on inflation, interest rates and economic growth, as a longitudinal proxy measure of earnings and employment and hence a determinant of deprivation and need for services.
- **Local (and local government) specific factors.** The cost of providing pensions will feature significantly, which in turn will be affected by discount rates, investment performance and longer-term actuarial assumptions. Furthermore, the Trade Union side has submitted a 5% pay claim for 2018/19, substantially above the 1% awarded in each of the last two years – for Brent each 1% costs around £1m.
- **National policy.** On the face of it additional funding for adult social care and homelessness prevention has been allocated, but the lack of longer-term commitments to this by government make planning at the local level difficult, and it is as yet too early to forecast accurately how service interventions and innovations funded from these will impact on the council's cost base.
- **Local policy.** Local choices to prioritise some services or policies over others is at the core of local government democracy and accountability, and the impact of possible policy initiatives will need to be factored into the planning process

Developments in local authority finance

- Comprehensive update to Cabinet 24 July 2017
- Or, comprehensive so far as possible given political uncertainty
 - **Business rates devolution (of which more later)**
 - **School funding and national funding formula**
 - **Adult social care and NHS integration**
 - Some new money, but time-limited rather than ongoing support
 - Can address immediate pressure and pump-prime one-off initiatives
 - **Homelessness reduction Act / Flexible homelessness support grant**
 - Some new money, but to meet new duties in the Act
 - Could lead to future cost avoidance if homelessness successfully reduced

Business rates devolution

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Previous timetable

- **Business rates devolution by 1 April 2019**
- **Brent's Scrutiny task group produced report in response**

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What will and won't be devolved?

- Power to decrease taxes - yes
- Power to increase taxes - no
- Retaining business rates receipts – no
 - Retain additional growth above a baseline
 - Top ups and tariffs still apply as a partial equalisation measure
- **Could still pilot London “pool” from 1 April 2018**
 - Could generate one-off additional receipt for Brent of c£7m in 2018/19

Technical reminder of how business rates devolution would work

- *“From 2013/14 onwards, local government has collectively retained 50% of the rates (in London this was split 30:20 between the boroughs and the Greater London Authority (GLA); the other 50% funds government grants to local government such as (RSG)”*
- *“However, INDIVIDUAL councils do NOT keep 50% of all the rates they collect. Instead, the government compares the rate income it expects each council to collect (the “business rates baseline”) with the level of funding it assesses each council needs (the “funding baseline”). Where a council’s rates baseline exceeds its funding needs, it pays a “**tariff**” into a national pool; where a council’s rates are less than its assessed needs, it receives a “**top-up**”.*
- *“When a council’s business rate tax base grows by more than inflation, it retains 50% of that growth to spend locally; if it is a tariff council, it also pays a “**levy**” on that growth into the national pot.”*
- *“If a council’s tax base falls, it bears the loss. However, the “**safety net**” – funded by the levy nationally – guarantees that each council will receive at least 92.5% of its baseline funding.”*

The Local Government Finance Bill that wasn't

- Parliamentary process was largely but not entirely complete prior to the General Election, so the Bill fell and wasn't put back into the Queen's speech afterwards

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DCLG have yet to provide a clear steer on how the policy will proceed

- Some commentators suggest much of it could be done by Executive Order...provided the political will (and perhaps consensus?) was there
- Mostly, we need to watch how the policy develops nationally and respond accordingly
- There is an opportunity for London to form a pilot "pool"

Business rates pooling

- **DCLG has already allowed 100% retention for “pools” on a pilot basis**
 - Therefore, this can be done under existing legislation
 - We believe DCLG are still supportive of pilots, and would like London to do so
- **If London pooled business rates in 2018/19 then there might be up to £234m extra to distribute**
 - Assumes growth in 2018/19 is at rate of most recent forecast for 2017/18
 - Actual growth may be different or lower
 - Could be negative, but “no detriment” guarantee from DCLG, so can’t be worse off by joining a pilot pool

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This is, on average, c£7m for each of the 33 boroughs on a one-off basis

- **It is over and above 50% scheme, after protecting each authority**
- **Takes no new responsibility for more services**
- **Requires all 33 boroughs to agree unanimously how to share the proceeds**

What happens to the surplus?

- Whatever the boroughs collectively agree
- For example:
 - *In proportion to growth (Brent's share would be £6.2m)*
 - *In equal shares (Brent's share would be £7.1m)*
 - *In relation to other contributing factors like housing (?)*
 - *To finance mutually beneficial infrastructure investment (?)*
- Timetable
 - Discussion at London Councils Leaders' committee in July
 - Consultation process commences afterwards
 - In principle agreement from boroughs in around October
 - Final sign off as part of budget setting

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**Resources & Public Realm
Scrutiny Committee**
11th July 2017

**Report from the Chief Executive's
Department**

For Action

**Proposed Scope for Scrutiny Task Group on the use of Food
Banks in Brent**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed scope for the Scrutiny task group on the use of food banks in Brent. This task group has been requested by the Scrutiny members as there has been a noticeable increase in the usage of food banks, both in Brent and nationally.
- 1.2 The task group will look at Brent, London and the national picture, with a focus on understanding the issue and the current position of central government, local authorities and other public sector partners.
- 1.3 The purpose of the task group will be to analyse four key areas:

Understanding the drivers and scale of the problem

- How and why referrals are being made
- How many referrals
- Where are referrals made
- How are these being monitored

Policy and practice - Are food banks here to stay?

- Local, London and Nation Wide
- Local public sector partners – Job Centres, DWP, NHS, schools
- Private sector (food donators/suppliers)

The experience of the resident

- The food bank journey experience
- What support is provided
- Sustainable solutions

Public Perception

- Education
- Stigma and stereotyping
- Community integration
- Supporting your local food banks

- 1.4 The task group will review the local arrangements in Brent, national policy and guidelines and the views and opinions from local residents and businesses. The task group will also consult with experts in this field and other London boroughs which have been identified as leaders in this area.
- 1.5 The task group will review the four key areas; which it will seek to examine in the context of Brent, these are:
- Gain a clear understanding of the triggers for food bank usage, with specific focus on welfare reform and the DWP. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations based on evidence with a view to improve processes and reduce delays in welfare payments to reduce the demand for food banks.
 - Establish if there is a link between austerity policies and welfare reform; and the increased use of food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations regarding a lobbying strategy for one or more welfare reforms.
 - Gain understanding and transparency of the local and national policies and strategic direction regarding the use of food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations for government (local, regional and National) to agree a strategy on the need and use of food banks. This may also be done through lobbying.
 - Identify any gaps in current working model and together with local partners, make recommendations for a collaborative approach to working with and supporting food banks.
 - Establish best practise for local authorities to work in agreement with food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations where appropriate, that would allow the council and local partners to operate in a way that is conducive to the service that food banks offer.
 - The council is in an informed position to make good choices regarding food poverty and its position on welfare reform.
- 1.6 There is clear alignment with the priorities of the council as set out within the Borough Plan and the Brent 2020 Vision; with specific focus on:
- Supporting vulnerable people and families when they need it
 - Making sure that inequalities in the quality of life in different parts of the borough are tackled by a stronger focus on local needs
 - Building partnership – between local service providers and between local services and residents – to find new ways of providing services that are more finely tailored to individual, community and local needs

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee are asked to agree the scope, terms of reference and time scale for the task group on the Use of Food Banks in Brent, attached as Appendices A and B.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 With member consensus on gaining a better understanding, ensuring that the council has clear policy and is informed. Members of the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee requested a time-limited task group undertake a focused piece on the use of Food Banks in Brent. The proposed scope and terms of reference for this work are attached as Appendices A and B.

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PETER GADSDON,
Director Performance Policy and Partnerships

Appendix A

The use of Food Banks in Brent Proposed scope for Scrutiny Task Group July 2017

Task Group Chair: Cllr Roxanne Mashari

Task Group Members: TBC

Time frame: Tuesday 7 November 2017

1. What are we looking at?

Food Poverty: The inability of individuals and households to obtain an adequate and nutritious diet, often because they cannot afford healthy food or there is a lack of shops in their area that are easy to reach.¹

Food Insecurity: The limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g. without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies).²

Food Banks

Nationally food banks have been opening at an extraordinary rate in austerity Britain. New research by the Independent Food Aid Network, featured in The Guardian newspaper on the 29th May 2017, revealed that there were at least 672 independently run food banks operating across the UK. Including the Trussell Trust this figure rises to approximately 2000 food banks operating in the UK, but this does not include informal food parcel distribution by social welfare charities, children's centres, churches, housing associations, hospitals and other groups.

London is often seen as an affluent city, and an engine of wealth-creation for the rest of the UK. But this perception masks high levels of deprivation and extremes of inequality. More than a quarter of Londoners live in poverty, and of these the majority live in families with at least one person in paid work. In the past decade, as wages have fallen in real terms and living costs have risen, the number of people in working poverty has increased by 70%. Almost a fifth of jobs in London pay below the London Living Wage, the amount needed to live a modest but decent life.³

Food poverty is part of this darker picture, there are now food banks in almost every community, from the East End of London to the Cotswolds. Food poverty can be defined as the inability to afford, or to have access to, the food needed for a healthy diet.⁴ It is also important that people can access food in a way which is dignified and socially acceptable.⁵ When people struggle to feed themselves adequately and nutritiously, it undermines health and educational attainment and ultimately adds to pressure on services. Food insecurity is an alternative term, which in particular illustrates people's uncertainty about being able to provide for themselves and their families.

¹ Food Standards Agency

² The Food Foundation

³ Trust for London / New Policy Institute (2015) London's Poverty Profile 2015

⁴ Department of Health

⁵ E. Dowler (2012) The Future of UK Household Security, University of Warwick

While there is no official measurement of food poverty or food insecurity, a range of data indicates the scale of the problem. 1.2 million food aid packages were given out by Trussell Trust food banks in London during the last financial year and this was the ninth consecutive year in which demand has risen. These figures are often described as the tip of the iceberg given the high number of households in poverty and likely to be experiencing food insecurity. For example, 9% of children in London say they sometimes, or often, go to bed hungry.

2. Why are we looking at this area?

The task group is looking at this area because food bank use is increasing, largely due to benefit sanctions, delays and disputes with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The task group are also looking at this area because of the human impact food poverty is having on its communities. The task group would like to understand the scale and drivers of food poverty and food insecurity.

Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)

Brent members and officers are dealing with more and more cases of residents in financial crisis, largely in response to benefit sanctions, delays and disputes with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). When residents find themselves in these crisis situations their needs are assessed and referred to food banks. This is supported by the service user data provided by the food banks (Table 2.).

Direct impact on residents

Behind the numbers and the trends are a section of society who lack the resources to meet their basic needs. These families are in financial crisis and this can be a stressful and worrying time. For example:

- Families have to decide between heating their homes or feeding their children.
- People wake up each day to feelings of stress, uncertainty and insecurity,
- Children struggle to pay attention at school because they feel hungry, and a school lunch may be the only substantial meal of a child's day.
- This can trigger mental health issues or substance misuse.

Understanding the increase in food bank use

The steady increase in use of food banks seems to directly correlate with the welfare reform changes. Such crises tended to be exacerbated by poverty and low pay, which are also direct causes for many to seek assistance. Food banks feel that they only have the capacity to deal with the logistics of feeding more and more people, with no time to advocate for changes that would eradicate the need for food banks in the first place.

Local Context – Brent

There are three official food banks operating in Brent:

1. Brent Food Bank - The Trussell Trust Network, Neasden
2. Sufra NW London Food Bank (independent), Stonebridge

3. St Laurence Larder (independent – Church), Kilburn.

Individuals can only access the food banks via a referral. A referral can be made by a number of agreed local partners, which include a number of departments within the council. Individuals or families will need to contact one of the partners who will assess their need, and make a decision on whether they are eligible to access the food bank. This is done by issuing food vouchers that can then be redeemed at one of the food banks.

The Trussell Trust are able to produce data using their network but this does not include other food banks, so there is no official method of collecting, collating and reporting data of overall food bank usage in Brent. The data below sets out the local context for Brent:

Out-of-work benefits claimants: There were a total of 5,260 residents in receipt of out-of-work benefits. This is 2.4% of the total resident population which is above the London and national average of 2.1%.⁶

Gross Weekly Pay: The average gross weekly pay for Brent residents is £550 a week, this is below the London average of £632 per week but slightly above the national average of £541 per week.⁷

The statistics below are provided by Sufra NW London, just one of the three official food banks in Brent. Many other organisations are providing food parcels in less formal arrangements.

Table 1.

	2015-2016	2016-2017
Total Number of Food Parcels	1,760	1,764
Total Number of Recipients	3,716	3,779

Table 2.

Reasons for Food Bank Usage - Priority Group	Number	%
Individuals awaiting payment of benefits	676	42.40%
Individuals not eligible for statutory benefits	172	10.80%
Low-income, working families	168	10.50%
Refugees / Asylum seekers	122	7.70%
Individuals/Family Members with disability or long-term illness	115	7.20%
Individuals whose benefits have been disrupted (including those sanctioned)	106	6.70%
Individuals with a history of drug/alcohol abuse	102	6.40%
Victims of domestic violence, abuse and/or crime	50	3.10%
Ex-Offenders	45	2.80%
Individuals who have not applied for benefits	38	2.40%

⁶ NOMIS May 2017

⁷ NOMIS 2016

Table 3.

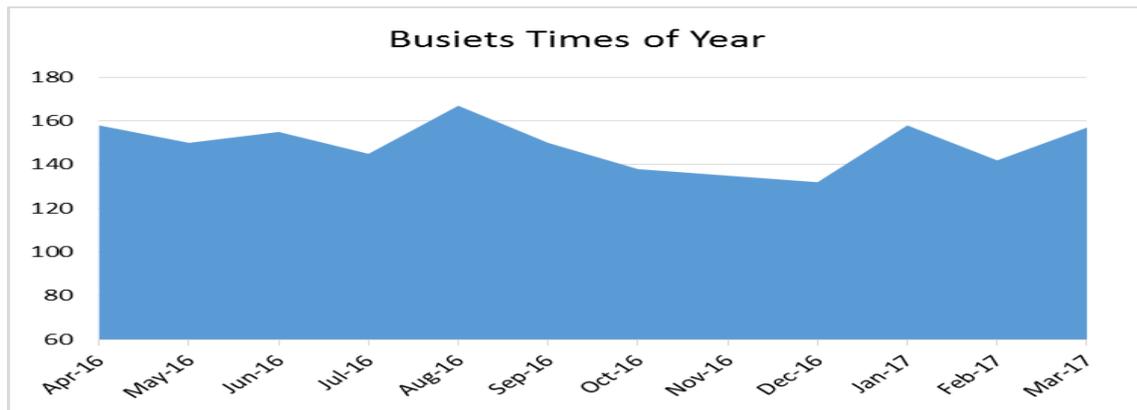
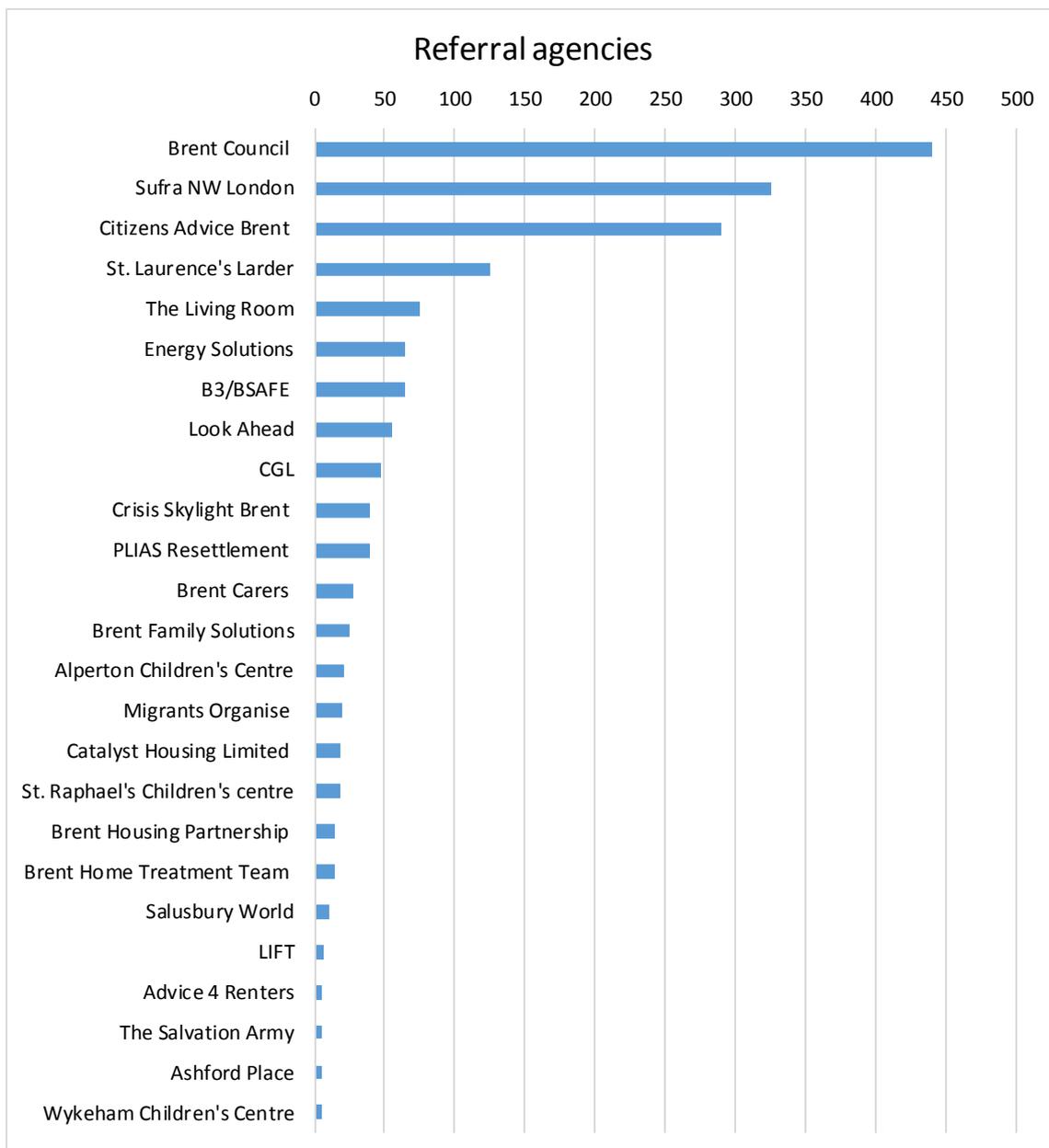


Table 4.



3. Legislation and Government Policy

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the governing body that oversee food banks; there is only EU legislation that food banks need to adhere to. EU food hygiene law requires the registration of those operations or activities where food is supplied - whether given away free or sold for some form of monetary or other return – which are deemed to be: ‘undertakings, the concept of which implies a certain continuity of activities and a certain degree of organisation’. In England, registration is with the local authority environmental health departments.

There is no other legislation or policy that relate to food banks. The guidance will be reviewed in June 2018 although the FSA welcomes feedback from users at any time.

4. What are the main issues?

There are a number of issues which arise with the increased use of food banks. Concern is focused on the vulnerable residents in our communities such as the elderly, disabled and children. Children and young people’s education are known to suffer dramatically when they go to school hungry. We are also concerned with the lack of understanding of why individuals need to use food banks and tackling the stigma and stereotyping of individuals who need to rely on food banks.

However the following concerns relate to the main issue of food poverty and food bank usage:

Welfare sanctions, delays and disputes

It is felt that the Department of work and Pensions’ welfare sanctions, delays and disputes are the number one reason why people need to access food banks; this is supported by data from food banks on the reason why people are accessing their services.

No clear policies

There are also concerns as to the fact that there is no clear direction from central government regarding food banks. Many local authorities like Brent find themselves in uncharted territory in relation to food banks and there are no policies on a local or national level. Alongside no clear guidance for local authorities, there is very little formal guidance or standards for the food banks themselves.

Working across partners

Across the borough there are a number of organisations from across both the public and private sector who interact with the food banks, either via a supporting or service providing capacity. Each partner is working in a silo with one or all of the food banks in Brent. This can lead to duplication and misuse, but more importantly there are missed opportunities to share information, resources, best practice and generally working as a cohesive group.

Recording and sharing of data

There are organisations such as the Trussell Trust who are able to collect some information, which show a worrying increase in the usage of food banks. However, with no central collection, it is difficult to ascertain the scale of the problem or how to tackle this issue.

5. What should the review cover?

There are four key areas that the review will focus on:

Understanding the drivers and scale of the problem

- How and why referrals are being made
- How many referrals are made?

- Where are referrals made?
- How are these being monitored?

Policy and practice - are food banks here to stay?

- Local, London and Nationwide
- Local public sector partners – Job Centres, DWP, NHS, schools
- Private sector (food donors/suppliers)

The experience of the resident

- The food bank journey experience
- What support is provided?
- Sustainable solutions

Public Perception

- Education
- Stigma and stereotyping
- Community integration
- Supporting your local food banks

6. How do we engage with the community and our internal and external partners?

As part of this review the task group will invite service users, relevant council teams and partners to get involved, through workshops, public group discussions and one-to-one interviews.

Service Users: Group 1

- A sample of service users:
 - From across all the Brent food banks
 - Who need to use food banks for different reason
 - Who represent some of our most vulnerable groups

Partners: Group 2

- Relevant Council Departments:
 - Welfare and Benefits
 - Brent Housing Partnership
 - Children Centre's
 - Children's Social Services
 - Adults Social Services
- Brent Food Banks:
 - Brent Food Banks - Trussell Trust network
 - Sufra NW London
 - St Laurence Larder
- Brent partners:
 - Citizens advice Brent
 - NHS/CCG

- Schools
- Job Centre Plus
- Private sector (Local)
 - West London Business,
 - Tesco
 - Asda
 - Park Royal Business
 - FSB Brent Business

Partners: Group 3

- The Trussell Trust
- Independent Food Aid Network
- Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming
- House of Commons (HoC)
- Mayor's Office - Food Poverty
- Local Government Association (LGA)
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
- Best Practice Local Authorities:
 - LB Lewisham
 - LB Lambeth
 - LB Greenwich
 - LB Islington

7. What could the review achieve?

The review will strive to:

- Gain a clear understanding of the triggers for food bank usage, with specific focus on welfare reform and the DWP. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations based on evidence with a view to improve processes and reduce delays in welfare payments to reduce the demand for food banks.
- Establish if there is a link between austerity policies and welfare reform; and the increased use of food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations regarding a lobbying strategy for one or more welfare reforms.
- Gain understanding and transparency of the local and national policies and strategic direction regarding the use of food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations for government (local, regional and National) to agree a strategy on the need and use of food banks. This may also be done through lobbying.

- Identify any gaps in current working model and together with local partners, make recommendations for a collaborative approach to working with and supporting food banks.
- Establish best practise for local authorities to work in agreement with food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations where appropriate, that would allow the council and local partners to operate in a way that is conducive to the service that food banks offer.
- The council is in an informed position to make good choices regarding food poverty and its position on welfare reform.

Appendix B

THE USE OF FOOD BANKS IN BRENT MEMBERS TASK GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

A. CONTEXT

Food Banks

Nationally food banks have been opening at an extraordinary rate in austerity Britain. New research by the Independent Food Aid Network, featured in The Guardian newspaper on the 29th May 2017, revealed that there were at least 672 independently run food banks operating across the UK. Including the Trussell Trust this figure rises to approximately 2000 food banks operating in the UK, but this does not include informal food parcel distribution by social welfare charities, children's centres, churches, housing associations, hospitals and other groups.

London is often seen as an affluent city, and an engine of wealth-creation for the rest of the UK. But this perception masks high levels of deprivation and extremes of inequality. More than a quarter of Londoners live in poverty, and of these the majority live in families with at least one person in paid work. In the past decade, as wages have fallen in real terms and living costs have risen, the number of people in working poverty has increased by 70%. Almost a fifth of jobs in London pay below the London Living Wage, the amount needed to live a modest but decent life.⁸

Food poverty is part of this darker picture, there are now food banks in almost every community, from the East End of London to the Cotswolds. Food poverty can be defined as the inability to afford, or to have access to, the food needed for a healthy diet.⁹ It is also important that people can access food in a way which is dignified and socially acceptable.¹⁰ When people struggle to feed themselves adequately and nutritiously, it undermines health and educational attainment and ultimately adds to pressure on services. Food insecurity is an alternative term, which in particular illustrates people's uncertainty about being able to provide for themselves and their families.

While there is no official measurement of food poverty or food insecurity, a range of data indicates the scale of the problem. 1.2 million food aid packages were given out by Trussell Trust food banks in London during the last financial year and this was the ninth consecutive year in which demand has risen. These figures are often described as the tip of the iceberg given the high number of households in poverty and likely to be experiencing food insecurity. For example, 9% of children in London say they sometimes, or often, go to bed hungry.

B. PURPOSE OF GROUP

A Council Members' task group chaired by an elected member and coordinated by a council Scrutiny officer was set up in July 2017. Sponsored by the Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee, the aim of task group is to collate, review and evaluate evidence gathered from various sources.

This includes the Brent food banks, service users, Brent council's welfare and customer Services, Children's and Adult's social care teams. The review will also consult with Brent

⁸Trust for London / New Policy Institute (2015) London's Poverty Profile 2015

⁹ Department of Health

¹⁰ E. Dowler (2012) The Future of UK Household Security, University of Warwick

partners, both local and private sector, such as BHP, schools health, Asda, Tesco and Park Royal Business.

The task group will also engage with national charities and specialist non-government organisations (NGO). Local business groups and central government organisations which include visit to, Local London Assembly (Mayors office), London Councils, Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), will also be invited to participate.

It will be vital for the task group to consult with other local authorities, specifically the London boroughs of Lewisham, Lambeth, Greenwich and Islington, who have been singled out for their good work.

The objectives will be to:

1. Liaise with stakeholders to gather evidence.
2. Use reviewed evidence to inform findings and recommendations for reducing food bank usage and mitigate the impacts on Brent residents.

C. AIM & OBJECTIVES

Aim of the task group is gain a better understanding of the triggers and drivers for the use of food banks, in particularly the rise in usage rate. With this knowledge the task group can make recommendations to that will help in reducing rates and mitigate negative impacts on Brent residents.

AIMS

The aims of the task group form four main themes

Understanding the drivers and scale of the problem

- How and why referrals are being made
- How many referrals are made?
- Where are referrals made?
- How are these being monitored?

Policy and practice - are food banks here to stay?

- Local, London and Nationwide
- Local public sector partners – Job Centres, DWP, NHS, schools
- Private sector (food donors/suppliers)

The experience of the resident

- The food bank journey experience
- What support is provided?
- Sustainable solutions

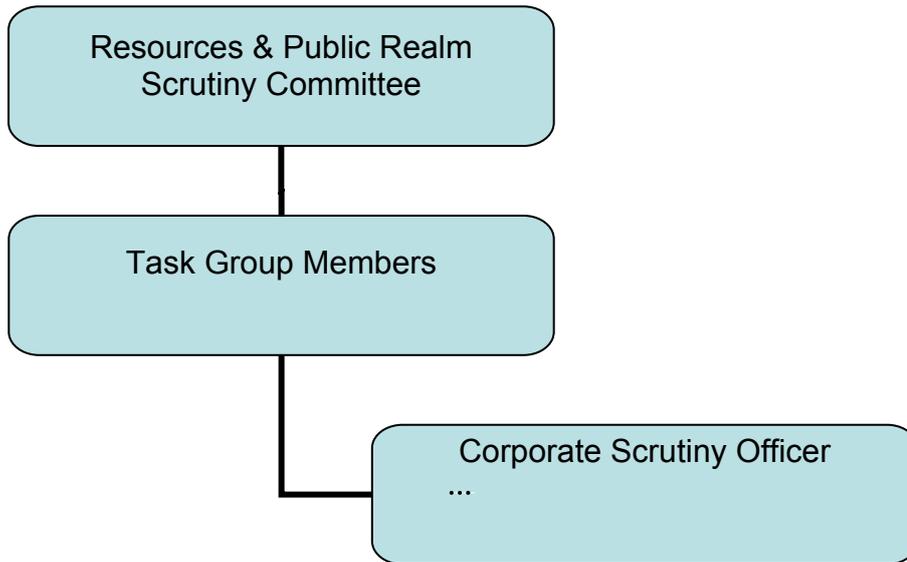
Public Perception

- Education
- Stigma and stereotyping
- Community integration
- Supporting your local food banks

OBJECTIVES

- Gain a clear understanding of the triggers for food bank usage, with specific focus on welfare reform and the DWP. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations based on evidence with a view to improve processes and reduce delays in welfare payments to reduce the demand for food banks.
- Establish if there is a link between austerity policies and welfare reform; and the increased use of food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations regarding a lobbying strategy for one or more welfare reforms.
- Gain understanding and transparency of the local and national policies and strategic direction regarding the use of food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations for government (local, regional and National) to agree a strategy on the need and use of food banks. This may also be done through lobbying.
- Identify any gaps in current working model and together with local partners, make recommendations for a collaborative approach to working with and supporting food banks.
- Establish best practise for local authorities to work in agreement with food banks. Through the review the task group would look to make recommendations where appropriate, that would allow the council and local partners to operate in a way that is conducive to the service that food banks offer.
- The council is in an informed position to make good choices regarding food poverty and its position on welfare reform.

D. GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY



E. MEMBERSHIP

1. Cllr Roxanne Mashari (Chair)
2. TBC
3. TBC
4. TBC

Kisi Smith-Charlemagne – Scrutiny Officer

Other key stakeholders would be invited as appropriate.

F. QUORUM & FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

There should be at least 2 members present at each meeting. A minimum would be the Chair, and another member of the task group. The task group will meet twice per month or approximately every two weeks with sub meetings held between the chair and the Scrutiny Officer as required.

G. DATE OF REVIEW

Start: July 2017

End: Scheduled for presentation to the Scrutiny Committee on 7 November 2017.

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